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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000833

SIPDIS

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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2018
TAGS: PGOV PREL ASEC PHUM ZI
SUBJECT: MUGABE SPEECH DAMPENS EXCITEMENT OF SIGNING
CEREMONY

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) President Mugabe and Prime Minister Tsvangirai delivered contrasting speeches following today's signing of a power-sharing accord between ZANU-PF and the two MDC opposition factions. Tsvangirai stressed the need for governmental unity and immediate food and medical assistance to Zimbabwe's most desperate citizens, while Mugabe laid the blame for Zimbabwe's struggles on Britain and the U.S. and heaped praise on South Africa's Mbeki. The audience was generally supportive of both, but booing could be heard during some of Mugabe's more outrageous statements. END SUMMARY.

Tsvangirai's Speech Takes the High Road

¶2. (SBU) Newly-anointed Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai delivered a statesmanlike address to the assembled audience of regional heads-of-state, party heavyweights, foreign diplomats, and local press who bore witness to today's signing of a new power-sharing agreement between Mugabe's ruling ZANU-PF party and the opposition MDC. Tsvangirai delivered a well-crafted speech stressing the need for governmental unity and service to Zimbabweans in need. He highlighted the urgent need for renewed international assistance in the form of food, medicine, electricity, gasoline, and financial investment. This was consistent with what he privately told the Ambassador yesterday when he explained that his rationale for signing was the dire and immediate plight facing Zimbabweans.

¶3. (SBU) In an attempt to bridge the political divide, Tsvangirai was careful to avoid blaming Mugabe or ZANU-PF directly for the country's troubles and never raised the

issue of corruption or patronage. Magnanimously, he even quoted from Mugabe's independence speech at Lancaster House in 1980 when he said, "We must turn our swords into ploughshares." Tsvangirai's speech was well-received by the audience.

¶ 14. (SBU) MDC faction leader Arthur Mutumbara also spoke of the need for unity and service to the people of Zimbabwe, before digressing into a near rant about the need for a Zimbabwean economy based on advanced transformation and value added, rather than primary materials.

Mugabe's Speech Took the Other Road

¶ 15. (SBU) Mugabe's speech seized on the opportunity to tell Africa's elite and the international audience that continued British and American interference through sanctions and a desire to control Zimbabwe's natural resources brought about the need for this political arrangement. He also was effusive in his praise for the role played by South Africa's Thabo Mbeki as a mediator to the agreement. In contrast to Tsvangirai's concise 13 minute speech, Mugabe's lasted 51 minutes. He shifted from the well-rehearsed--his lengthy discussion of Zimbabwe's early days of independence and call for African unity--to the impromptu--his rail against a British desire for "regime change." Later in the speech he charged the opposition with using violence during the

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election, at which point loud boos could be heard. Mugabe quickly backtracked and explained that he was referring to Africa's history of violent elections. Mbeki was clearly uncomfortable during much of Mugabe's speech, while Tsvangirai looked down or rested his face in his hand.

¶ 16. (SBU) Of concern was that Mugabe addressed Tsvangirai as "Mr. Tsvangirai" in contrast to the title of Prime Minister that South African President Mbeki and Tanzanian President Kikwete had used. Additionally, Mugabe spoke of the need for the new ministers to rely on the experience of ZANU-PF officials when assuming their new positions.

COMMENT

¶ 17. (C) Unlike Mugabe's famous 1980 speech, his address today didn't seek to find common ground. More indicative of Mugabe's intentions, though, will be the still unannounced division of ministries. We are hearing that ZANU-PF is still fighting for all the most important ministries, including defense, home affairs (police), and finance. Should that happen, it would belie this deal's branding as one of "power sharing." END COMMENT

MCGEE